**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 12, line 18, with the following redlined paragraph:

If all the memory cells to which the verification pulse has been applied are erased (output YES from block 240), then 32-bit double soft-programming multiplicity is set (block 250), and control returns to block 140, indicated by block A in Figures 2 and 3, of the main routine "Soft-Program" (Figure 2, above), whereas if amongst the memory cells to which the verification pulse has been applied there are depleted memory cells (output NO from block 240), then it is verified whether a pre-set maximum number of attempts of soft-programming has been reached (block 260).

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 14, line 3, with the following redlined paragraph:

If this maximum number of attempts has not yet been reached (output NO from block 430), then the routine "SP_Pulse" is recalled, whereas if the maximum number of attempts has already been reached (output YES block 430), then control returns to block 420, in which 16-bit single soft-programming multiplicity is forced, and thence block 300, indicated by block B in Figures 3 and 4, of the routine "SP_Pulse" (Figure 3, above) is reached.